

Conference on Disarmament

English

Final record of the one thousand three hundred and fiftieth plenary meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 10 March 2015, at 10.10 a.m.

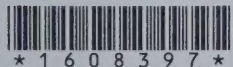
President: Mr. Vaanchig Purevdorj(Mongolia)

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The President: I call to order the 1350th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

As you know, this past Sunday, 8 March, saw the observance of International Women's Day. In this connection, as I mentioned yesterday, I would like to invite a representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to address the Conference, as in previous years.

Now it is my pleasure to give the floor to Ms. Mia Gandenberger to make a statement to the Conference on the occasion of International Women's Day.

Ms. Gandenberger (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom): For the last few years, my organization — the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom — has been permitted to deliver a statement to the Conference on Disarmament to mark International Women's Day. For the years before that, our statement was read out to the Conference by the sitting President.

This is the only time of year that any voice from civil society is allowed inside this Conference chamber. And this may be the last time our voice is heard here.

The Conference has not engaged in substantive work in 17 years. A very small minority of States have managed to block the adoption or implementation of a programme of work for all that time. And yet many of the other members refuse to allow a change in working methods, rules of procedure, enlargement of membership or engagement with civil society.

On this last point, let me explain to you what it is like being the only civil society organization that still pays attention to the Conference on Disarmament.

Last week, for the high-level segment, I had to make a detour on my way to the gallery, because Security would not let me through — I would have been too close to the chamber in which, about 20 minutes later, a high-level dignitary would be speaking.

Even after any regular plenary session, I have to wait outside the Council Chamber for someone from the secretariat to hand me the statements that you delivered, because I am not allowed into the room. This practice, by the way, was never an official decision. In 2004, it was decided that civil society was allowed on the floor, before and after the meeting. That changed without an official decision ever being put on the record.

These are but a few of the indignities that civil society experiences at the Conference on Disarmament. We do not experience them at other disarmament forums, not at the First Committee, not at meetings of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, not at meetings of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. So, you can imagine our delight when Ambassador Lomónaco tabled the draft decision to increase our access and engagement with the Conference. And I assume you can imagine our disappointment, to put it mildly, when you started discussing that draft decision.

Aside from the sexist, degrading remark about topless ladies throwing bottles of mayonnaise, the level of disrespect to civil society and disconnection from the outside world demonstrated by the debate over this proposal was astounding.

Many of you have expressed your appreciation for our work over and over again. And we do enjoy working with you towards our collective goals. But at the moment that it matters, some of you put process over progress. Member States that pride themselves on being open, democratic societies said they needed more time, had some more questions, wanted some changes, and in the end could not agree to what from our perspective was smaller than the smallest common denominator.

We in the League have therefore decided that it is finally time to cease our engagement with this body.

While the debate over the proposal to amend the Conference's engagement with civil society was important in terms of timing, it is not the key reason that we have come to this decision. This is a body that has firmly established that it operates in a vacuum; that it is disconnected from the outside world; that it has lost perspective of the bigger picture of human suffering and global injustice. Maintaining the structures that reinforce deadlock has become more important than fulfilling the objective for which it was created: negotiating disarmament treaties.

We can no longer invest efforts in such a body. Instead we will continue our work elsewhere. There is much work to be done.

Indeed, yesterday we held our International Women's Day seminar, the focus of which was gender and disarmament. This is a subject receiving increased attention because, unlike in the Conference on Disarmament, some States, international organizations and civil society groups are becoming more responsive to the realization that gender shapes the impact of weapons and violence on societies. It shapes the role of weapons in society. And it shapes how we work together to develop and implement the policy and legal responses that violence demands.

We know that women and men are exposed to different patterns of violence. Not as a result of biology, but of socially constructed gender roles. Gender-based violence is violence that is directed at a person because of his or her gender. The majority of gender-based violence is violence inflicted by men onto women. However, men also face gender-based violence, particularly in armed conflict, where men and adolescent boys tend to be the most frequent direct victims of violence.

While men make up the most direct victims, this is rarely presented as evidence of their weakness. Our social relationship with weapons is linked to a persistent construction of women as the weaker sex and in need of protection by men.

Weapons are considered to be men's business. Our societies still expect men to be violent, and often continue to perpetuate this. We can see this expectation in the reported policy of using maleness as a signifier of militancy in targeting and casualty analysis in relation to drone strikes.

And so we edge towards the protection only of "innocent civilians", meaning women, children and the elderly, simultaneously reinforcing expectations that men are violent, and undermining the law and stripping women of their agency.

Women affected by conflict often have less access to health care, services and reconstruction processes. If heading the household, they sometimes face systematic discrimination and can become more susceptible to further physical attack and sexual exploitation.

Framing women as weak and in need of protection continues to enable their exclusion from authoritative social and political roles, and weakens the effectiveness of those processes.

We have seen some progress in recent years, notably United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and consideration from 2010 in the General Assembly. The provisions within the Arms Trade Treaty on the prevention of arms transfers that could facilitate gender-based violence are a landmark.

But much remains to be done. And it is this work, and many other aspects of disarmament and demilitarization, that are worthy of our efforts.

We will continue to focus our time and energy on more promising forums and initiatives, but we wish you luck for your future endeavours in this chamber.

Should the Conference begin to work again in the future, we will happily return and pick up where we left off.

The President: I thank Ms. Gandenberger for her statement.

As I indicated earlier, today we will focus on the fourth core issue, namely effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Since it is the last plenary under the Mongolian presidency, at the end of the speakers' list I would like to take a few minutes to wrap up our presidency before we hand over the presidency to Morocco.

Now please allow me to turn to the list of speakers for today. I have on my list the Ambassador of Egypt. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Ramadan (Egypt): I have the honour to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Group of 21.

At the outset, Mr. President, the Group congratulates you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and expresses its appreciation for the open, transparent and efficient manner in which you are guiding the proceedings of the Conference.

The Group also would like to extend its gratitude to the former Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament for the efforts they deployed as a contribution to allow the Conference to resume substantive work, including negotiations at the earliest, and end the long impasse.

The Group of 21 would like to stress once again that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the Conference and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work, including, inter alia, negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The Group of 21 reaffirms its working papers submitted to the Conference in 2014, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, on nuclear disarmament, on negative security assurances and on prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The Group of 21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament without further delay. As the highest priority, the Conference should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in document CD/1999 that calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a zone of peace, on the occasion of the second summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana, Cuba, on 28 and 29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of the region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations on zones of peace in other regions of the world.

The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution 68/32 to follow up this meeting. As the Secretary-General of the United Nations rightly mentioned in the Conference on Disarmament last year: "The high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels." In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution, in particular its call for an urgent decision by the Conference to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The Group of 21 will make a separate statement in the Conference plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard.

The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-ended Working Group mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, and hopes that it will contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. To this end, the Group of 21 welcomes General Assembly resolution 68/46, which recognizes that the Open-ended Working Group engaged in an open, constructive, transparent and interactive manner to address various issues related to nuclear disarmament.

The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States and long-standing requests to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that non-nuclear-weapon States implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats from some nuclear-weapon States contrary to their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/69.

The Group concurs with the United Nations Secretary-General that there is growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the hosting of the conferences on this subject

convened in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2013, in Mexico on 13 and 14 February and in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014.

In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long-term catastrophic consequences for human health, the environment and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. In this regard, the Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

The Group of 21 members which are States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. These must be adequately reflected in the outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, together with the spirit of the pledges and national statements made by many States during and since the Vienna Conference aimed at securing progress on nuclear disarmament through the negotiation of legally binding effective measures, particularly a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time. We call on all nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear weapon detonation, we will endeavour to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

The Group of 21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the Conference's programme of work, including the programme of work adopted on 29 May 2009 that was not implemented and all subsequent efforts and proposals for a programme of work, including those tabled on 14 March 2012, 11 February 2013, 21 June 2013, 13 August 2013 and 29 January of this year — 2015 — that were not adopted, and the decision adopted in 2013 on the establishment of the informal working group with a mandate to produce a programme of work, and its re-establishment on 3 March 2014.

The Group reiterates the urgency that the Conference should adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, *inter alia*, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus.

The Group further believes that promoting the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercise political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the United Nations disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for the early convening of the fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and expresses its deep concern over the fact that it is yet to be convened.

The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and deeply regrets the delay in implementing concrete actions to that end.

The Group of 21 members which are States parties to the NPT express their continued concern that one of the important decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, concerning the convening of a conference by the United Nations and the co-sponsors of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in 2012, was not realized. They are disappointed that the subsequent efforts to convene such a conference in 2013 and 2014 were also not successful. They stress that the agreed mandate of the conference, as contained in the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference resolution on the Middle East and the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan, should be maintained and constitute the basis for convening the conference as well as its preparatory process.

The Group welcomes the upcoming Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, to be convened in New York in April 2015.

The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament. The Group also recognizes the importance of engagement between civil society and the Conference, in accordance with decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the Conference's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the Conference on Disarmament/civil society forum on 19 March 2015 to be hosted by the Acting Secretary-General of the Conference.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Egypt for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Bokhari (Pakistan): We are pleased to have this opportunity to hold focused discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, more commonly known as negative security assurances. The issue of negative security assurances has been on the Conference's agenda for almost half a century now. Pakistan believes that this issue is overripe for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference.

General Assembly resolution 2153 A (XXI) of 1966 called upon the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament "to consider urgently the proposal that nuclear-weapon Powers should give an assurance that they will not use, or threaten to use, nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States without nuclear weapons on their territories". In 1978, the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, adopted by consensus, called upon the nuclear-weapon States "to pursue efforts to conclude, as appropriate, effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

Beginning in 1980, the Conference on Disarmament began discussing negative security assurances. Yet it has little to show in terms of concrete progress. Pakistan has a long history of support and activism on this issue. From the late 1960s onwards, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan sought legally binding negative security assurances to safeguard its security from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against it. These efforts assumed greater urgency after nuclear weapons were introduced in our region in 1974.

In 1979, Pakistan tabled a draft international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in the Conference on Disarmament, contained in document CD/10.

Unfortunately, the ineffective and insufficient response from some key members of the international community was part of the reasons that compelled Pakistan to develop a nuclear deterrent of its own, which in retrospect has turned out to be the right decision.

Even after becoming a nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan did not abandon the cause of negative security assurances, but has continued to support it. Besides being consistent, we feel that the option of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is not only strategically untenable but morally unacceptable.

As a responsible nuclear-weapon State, Pakistan has a strategic doctrine based on maintaining credible minimum deterrence. We have given a unilateral unconditional pledge not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any State not possessing nuclear weapons, and we are ready to transform this pledge into a legally binding international instrument.

Since 1990, Pakistan has annually introduced a resolution on negative security assurances at the Assembly. The most recent version, General Assembly resolution 69/30, was adopted last year without a single negative vote: 125 States voted in favour, while 56 countries abstained. Paragraph 5 of this resolution recommends that the Conference on Disarmament should "actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international agreements to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, taking into account the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention".

Pakistan agrees with its fellow members of the Non-Aligned Movement that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination. Pakistan is committed to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world through the conclusion of a universal, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear weapons convention.

Pending such a convention, the long-standing and genuine aspiration of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive negative security guarantees should be fulfilled. Failure to make progress will further erode the so-called grand bargain of the non-proliferation regime. It would also be consistent with the step-by-step approach towards nuclear disarmament advocated by some countries.

The responses of some of the nuclear-weapon States to this long-standing demand, as contained in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), are insufficient and partial. Apart from China, which has given unconditional negative security assurances, the other unilateral declarations contain qualifiers, the interpretation of which lies with the States giving or making those declarations. They thus cannot replace the need for a credible and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

For us, these qualified declarations raise certain logical questions. For example, these declarations provide that the Security Council, and above all its nuclear-weapon State permanent members, will act immediately in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations in the event that non-nuclear-weapon States are the victim of an act of, or the object of a threat of, aggression in which nuclear weapons are used. What my delegation cannot understand is: how can the Security Council act immediately if the perpetrator of such an act is a veto-wielding member that can block any joint action by the Council? Besides, what good would the Security Council's reprisal be when the country attacked with nuclear weapons has already been devastated?

Clearly, the permanent members of the Security Council cannot act as judge, jury and executioner at the same time. If these States do not have any intention of using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, then they should formalize this in an international legally binding instrument.

In our view, the principle of the non-use of force or the threat to use force, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, extends to the use of nuclear weapons, without prejudice to Article 51, concerning the right to self-defence. Concluding a legally binding agreement on negative security assurances is therefore, in our view, an obligation, not an option.

Moreover, since negative security assurances do not involve any elimination, reduction or freeze on nuclear weapons, they do not undermine the security of any nuclear-weapon State.

As long as the goal of nuclear disarmament eludes us, negative security assurances can bridge the security gap between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. Concluding and implementing negative security assurances would cause no financial burden and is, therefore, a cost-free exercise, with immense benefits for global peace and security. Once concluded, negative security assurances would obviate concerns among non-nuclear-weapon States on account of new doctrines and technologies regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

Negative security assurances can also make a significant contribution to strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. Conversely, their absence would have an opposite effect. Negative security assurances would constitute a major confidence-building measure between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, thus leading to a genuinely conducive international environment facilitating eventual negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Indeed, commencing negotiations on this agenda item would also meet the demands of all member States calling for the Conference on Disarmament to undertake substantive negotiations, and would also end the deadlock in the Conference.

The Group of 21 countries, comprising more than half the membership of this august body, have repeatedly called for the establishment of a subsidiary body to negotiate negative security assurances. Substantive work could commence on the basis of the draft text submitted by Pakistan in 1979, contained in document CD/10. We are also ready to start negotiations on any other basis if that is what is required.

The informal discussions on negative security assurances that were held last year in the Conference under the schedule of activities were of great value in understanding the different perspectives and issues related to negative security assurances. In our view, the arguments that we heard against the commencement of negotiations on negative security assurances in the Conference did not relate to the national security concerns of States. We heard some nuclear-weapon States argue that the assurances provided through unilateral declarations and Security Council resolutions, as well as legally binding protocols to the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, are sufficient. States interested in receiving further assurances should establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones. As we have heard from those States that are meant to be assured by these unilateral declarations and nuclear-weapon-free-zone protocols, they do not find them adequate because of their attached conditionalities and interpretative statements. Moreover, those States that are outside existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, especially those non-nuclear-weapon States that belong to regions where the establishment of such zones is extremely problematic, should not be denied their entitlement to receive legally binding negative security assurances. Renouncing the right to acquire nuclear weapons is enough for receiving negative security assurances. Subjecting this grant of negative security assurances to another layer of non-proliferation commitment, such as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, is not fair to those States, especially in areas where such zones are not possible.

We would also like to understand why the concerns, if any, of those States opposing the commencement of negotiations on negative security assurances cannot be addressed

during the negotiations on negative security assurances in the Conference. In any event, they should at least acknowledge their responsibility for perpetuating the ongoing stalemate in the Conference by refusing to negotiate a legally binding treaty on negative security assurances.

In conclusion, we sincerely hope that the Conference will be able to undertake substantive work on the issue of negative security assurances during the current session under a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that also allows for progress on nuclear disarmament and prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The President: I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of South Africa. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Mancotywa-Kumsha (South Africa): The issue of security assurances has a long history and continues to remain important to South Africa, as indeed it does to all non-nuclear-weapon States. The significance of security assurances has been recognized in many documents, including the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), when the Conference agreed that legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, South Africa supports the provision of legally binding negative security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States. Indeed, in the 1999 NPT Preparatory Committee, South Africa submitted a proposal and provided elements for a draft protocol on negative security assurances. We have always argued that negative security assurances should be provided in the form of an international legally binding instrument, which either could be a separate agreement reached in the context of the NPT, or a protocol to the NPT. We do not believe that the unilateral declarations made by the nuclear-weapon States or the assurances provided in the context of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties are sufficient.

South Africa believes that negotiations on this instrument should take place under the NPT framework and not in the Conference on Disarmament. Our position on negative security assurances derives from the fact that the NPT is the international legal framework under which non-nuclear-weapon States committed to forgo the nuclear weapon option on the basis of the corresponding undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament. This grand bargain, which includes the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, was struck between NPT nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. As such, it is the NPT nuclear-weapon States which, pending nuclear disarmament, should provide unequivocal, legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, as part of the process towards the fulfilment of this bargain. Accordingly, for South Africa, such an instrument can be negotiated only within the framework of the NPT.

While South Africa believes that negative security assurances are best dealt with in the NPT context, we have never blocked discussions on this matter in the Conference on Disarmament, as part of a broader programme of work, as we want forward movement on our highest priority: nuclear disarmament. However, discussions on a legally binding framework within the Conference on Disarmament, which we agreed to as part of the 2010 action plan, are very different from negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. In this regard, action 7 and the accompanying introductory text clearly state that such discussions are without prejudice to efforts in the NPT.

In conclusion, until such time as nuclear weapons have been completely eliminated, South Africa believes that legally binding security assurances will enhance stability and contribute to international confidence, peace and security.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for her statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. Fu Cong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): It is entirely legitimate and reasonable for non-nuclear-weapon States to demand assurances against the threat of nuclear weapons and to have such assurances established in a legally binding form. Security assurances play a positive role in safeguarding the international non-proliferation regime that is based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in advancing the nuclear disarmament process and in creating a positive international and regional security environment.

Pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995), nuclear-weapon States have provided both positive and negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States. By signing and ratifying the relevant protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, they have also provided security assurances to the States parties to those treaties. These arrangements, however, are flawed by a lack of universality and effectiveness and fall short of addressing the security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States.

China believes that the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons is still the most fundamental way of resolving the issue of negative security assurances. Until that goal is achieved, it is imperative that all nuclear-weapon States effectively reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their national security policies, commit themselves to no first use of nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstances, and unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones and to conclude a legal instrument on negative security assurances as soon as possible. The Conference, for its part, should begin substantive work on the issue as soon as possible, on the basis of an agreed programme of work.

Ever since the first day that it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has solemnly pledged that at no time and under no circumstance would it be the first to use nuclear weapons. China has also unconditionally undertaken not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China also urges all other nuclear-weapon States to conclude a treaty on no first use of nuclear weapons.

In April 1995, the Government of China issued a statement in which it not only reaffirmed its unconditional negative security assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States but also undertook to provide positive security assurances. In its national implementation report submitted at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, China once again reaffirmed its assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, explicitly calling upon the international community to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible an international legal instrument providing unconditional negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States and urging the Conference to begin substantive work on the subject at an early date.

China has signed and ratified the relevant protocols to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. Last May, a representative of the Government of China also signed the protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We are working to complete the domestic ratification process as quickly as we can, and we look forward to the early entry into force of the protocol. China will continue its unflagging efforts to find an appropriate solution to the issue of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Algeria. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Algerian delegation would like to begin by welcoming the statement made by the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to mark International Women's Day, for which occasion I would like, in the name of the Algerian delegation, to congratulate our female colleagues here in the Conference and, through them, all the women of the world. The Algerian delegation believes that women, as sisters of men, have a great contribution to make to the issue of disarmament and to ensuring security and peace in the world, in accordance with resolutions of the United Nations.

Mr. President, the Algerian delegation would also like to open its statement by thanking you for your decision to use this sitting to focus on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, or what are known as negative security assurances. Before going into the view of the Algerian delegation on that issue, we would also like to support the statement made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 21.

We hope today that we will have the opportunity for a candid and sincere discussion between different States and groups of States on this pivotal issue which lies at the core of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and can limit the danger posed by those deadly weapons. What I mean is a frank and constructive dialogue between States which do not possess such weapons and States which do, without forgetting those States which, in one way or in another, pursue a nuclear deterrent policy within a framework of procedures and guarantees from nuclear-weapon States. I will begin my remarks by referring to the conclusions reached on this issue at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. In the preamble to its resolution 69/30, which concerns negative security assurances, the Assembly recognized that the independence and territorial integrity of non-nuclear-weapon States need to be safeguarded against the use or threat of use of force, including the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The resolution also underscored the need to develop effective measures and arrangements to ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, until nuclear disarmament can be achieved on a universal basis. To that end, in paragraph 5 of the resolution the Assembly recommended that the Conference on Disarmament should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international agreements to assure the non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, while in paragraph 2 it noted with satisfaction that in the Conference there is no objection, in principle, to the idea of an international convention in that regard.

The General Assembly has been adopting this resolution for a number of years but the Conference has been unable to make any progress because of the views of certain States which remain opposed to the proposal, despite the fact that the demand is a legitimate one. Negative security assurances are a core issue of vital importance to the security of non-nuclear-weapon States, their aim being to guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States within an unbalanced global nuclear framework. Security Council resolution 984 (1995) recognizes the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in receiving security assurances to protect them against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The resolution also underscores the legitimate concern of non-nuclear-weapon States that, in conjunction with their adherence to the Treaty, further appropriate measures will be undertaken to safeguard their security. Algeria believes that strengthening commitments and measures in that regard may guarantee the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and reinforce the non-proliferation

regime, while concluding treaties may smooth the path to disarmament by diminishing the importance of those weapons in the military policies of nuclear-weapon States.

The measures currently being taken, both the unilateral declarations by nuclear-weapon States referred to in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and the protocols annexed to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, are insufficient, freighted with conditions and unable to respond to the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States. In order for such arrangements to be effective and credible, we believe that they should be set down in a legally binding international instrument.

We recognize the right of all States to defend their own particular security concerns both inside and outside the Conference and we listened with great interest to the views expressed by delegations here on the need for the programme of work to address their security concerns. That is of course a legitimate right. At the same time, in our modern, interconnected world and with our mutual international obligations, the value of such security remains relative. The security of nations cannot be established categorically by denying other States the right to security. As the Chinese ambassador said yesterday, the security of certain States must not be purchased at the expense of other States. For this reason, we believe that negotiations — both in the Conference on Disarmament and in the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — on a legally binding international instrument on security arrangements for non-nuclear-weapon States do not represent a danger to any country in any way. We look forward to hearing the views of other countries on this question and we believe, as we said at the beginning of our statement, that candid and sincere discussion on this issue will enable us to establish firm principles from which to move forward in our work on the agenda points.

The President: I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of France. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Simon-Michel (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, let me begin by thanking you for the opportunity to have this discussion today on negative security assurances. Many States have high expectations regarding this issue, and rightly so. As a nuclear-weapon State, France fully assumes its commitments and responsibilities.

My country's commitments with regard to security assurances, both negative and positive, for all non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) were set out in the statement made at the Conference on Disarmament by one of my predecessors on 6 April 1995. The United Nations Security Council took note of those commitments in its resolution 984 (1995) of 11 April 1995.

The commitments were recently reaffirmed at the highest level by the President of France, Mr. François Hollande, in an important address on nuclear deterrence that he delivered at Istres on 19 February 2015. For the first time at this level, the President of the Republic solemnly reaffirmed the security assurances given by France to non-nuclear-weapon States, while specifying that they applied only to countries that comply with their non-proliferation commitments.

Allow me to quote President Hollande: "I also wish to clarify our relationship with a number of States which, as parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, have called for safeguards against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. This is a legitimate desire. France made a unilateral declaration that in no way undermines the right to self-defence, of which the Security Council took note in 1995. France has confirmed the commitments that it has made with respect to nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. It was necessary to do so. Today, I solemnly reaffirm that France will not use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and that

observe their international obligations involving the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”

These security assurances are fully in line with other aspects of French nuclear deterrence policy, which asserts consistently and without any ambiguity that it is of a strictly defensive nature. “Deterrence by France aims to protect our country from any aggression by a State against our vital interests, wherever it comes from and in whatever form,” as the President of the Republic stated in the same speech three weeks ago. The use of nuclear weapons is therefore conceivable only in extreme circumstances of legitimate defence, as a right enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Nuclear weapons are not intended to gain any advantage in a conflict. They have no place in offensive strategies. They are designed for defensive strategies only. Our policy is based on limiting nuclear capabilities to what is strictly necessary. This is the principle of strict sufficiency. We would like to add in closing that this policy does not target any particular State and that the nuclear capabilities of France are not aimed at any target.

France has long supported the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. By becoming a party to the relevant protocols, it is able to reaffirm in a regional context the security assurances given unilaterally in the statement of 6 April 1995 that I referred to earlier.

In accordance with its obligations under action 9 of the 2010 NPT Review Conference action plan, France has made significant progress in this area. My country is a party to the protocols to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga), the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) and, more recently, the Treaty of Semipalatinsk. On 17 October 2014, France ratified the protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, which I had the honour of signing on behalf of France a few months earlier in New York, following two years of discussions.

In addition — and, Mr. President, I am aware of the importance you attach to this — in September 2012 we signed a joint declaration with Mongolia on its nuclear-weapon-free status.

Thus, there are now more than 100 States benefiting from this system of security assurances. France stands ready to broaden this system, in accordance with the principles established by the Disarmament Commission in 1999 and in conformity with international law. In particular, we are ready to sign the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty) as soon as possible.

From the outset, we have supported the plan to create a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We all know how important it is to hold a conference to address this issue, and we fervently hope that tangible progress can be made in this regard as soon as possible.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of France for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of the United States of America. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Wood (United States of America): I welcome this occasion to speak on the subject of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The United States recognizes the importance of security assurances to States that have forsworn nuclear weapons and that abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. Reflecting this understanding, the United States updated and strengthened its long-standing security assurances in the context of the United States Nuclear Posture Review published in

April 2010. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review declared that the United States will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that are party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and in compliance with their nuclear non-proliferation obligations. The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review also made clear that the United States would only consider the use of nuclear weapons in extreme circumstances to defend the vital interests of the United States or our allies and partners.

This negative security assurance is one of the benefits that non-nuclear-weapon States derive from being parties to the NPT and fulfilling their non-proliferation obligations. Beyond this assurance, the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review made clear that it is in the interest of the United States as well as that of all nations that the nearly 70-year record of non-use of nuclear weapons be extended for ever. A practical step-by-step approach, as laid out by President Obama in his 2009 Prague speech, has proved to be the most effective means to increase stability, reduce nuclear danger and advance the disarmament objectives of the NPT. Among these steps, as noted in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, the role of nuclear weapons in United States national security and United States military strategy has been reduced significantly in recent decades.

The United States has also long supported well-crafted nuclear-weapon-free zones that are vigorously enforced and developed in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

In this regard, we were very pleased the nuclear-weapon States were able to sign the Protocol to the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty on 6 May last year. We also ratified the Protocol to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and signed the protocols to the African and South Pacific nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties. Moreover, we are continuing our efforts with other nuclear-weapon States to engage the Association of Southeast Asian Nations with the hope that it will be possible soon for us to sign the revised protocol to the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaty. And, in conclusion, we are also continuing our regional diplomacy to convene the proposed Helsinki conference to discuss establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East.

We appreciate this opportunity once again to share our views on this topic and the practical steps we are taking.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United States of America for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. You have the floor, Ambassador.

Mr. Rowland (United Kingdom): Baroness Anelay set out the negative security assurances of the United Kingdom in her statement last week.

I would not want the statement made by Ms. Gandenberger to go undignified by an absence of comment on its substance. The United Kingdom recognizes that the world has moved on since the establishment of this body and that vibrant civil society comment on the proceedings of any forum is a good indicator of its relevance. It is therefore with sadness that we listened to the messages in Ms. Gandenberger's statement. I would like to put on the record again that the United Kingdom opposed on process grounds alone the draft decision put forward under the Mexican presidency covering civil society engagement. We would welcome a discussion of this issue as part of the work of the proposed working group on working methods. We hope that that proposal, along with the proposals to re-establish the working group on a programme of work and a schedule of activities, can promptly be agreed as a single package.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Mr. Nasserдин Heidari (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, let me first, as this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, congratulate you on the assumption of your presidency as the second President of this year of the Conference on Disarmament. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the issue of negative security assurances.

Negative security assurances were the cornerstone of the package that helped in the final conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The non-nuclear-weapon States decided to join the NPT being aware of the discriminatory nature of this Treaty, with the understanding that they would not be the target of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That is why in the resolution adopting the NPT, the General Assembly requested the then negotiating body to consider urgently the proposal that the nuclear-weapon States should give assurances that they would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States without nuclear weapons on their territories.

The history of the development of negative security assurances is indicative of the close linkage between the NPT and negative security assurances. In response to the insistent request of the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, the nuclear-weapon States made individual statements to the Conference on Disarmament and the Security Council on the eve of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. Negative security assurances were also part of the package for the indefinite extension of the NPT. Therefore, the issue of negative security assurances and the conclusion of the NPT and the indefinite extension of that Treaty are linked together, and nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility in this regard.

The credibility of the non-proliferation regime depends on the degree of fulfilment of the promises of the nuclear-weapon States as the highest beneficiaries of this international regime. The nuclear-weapon States made some unilateral declarations subject to the full commitment of nuclear-weapon States to their declarations. These assurances remain partial, declarative and limited, with no legal burden on the part of the nuclear-weapon States. The reluctance of some nuclear-weapon States to start negotiations on negative security assurances is further evidence in the subsequent history of nuclear disarmament. The Conference on Disarmament has witnessed quite a number of working papers and proposals that have long addressed negative security assurances. Indeed, if there had been political will, the negotiation of a treaty on negative security assurances would have reached concrete results many years ago.

It is deplorable that, after more than 34 years of presenting the issue in the Conference on Disarmament, negative security assurances still elude us, and we still live with the wish for a start to negotiations on negative security assurances.

Recent developments are not at all conducive to the goal of negative security assurances, and the resistance in this regard is indicative of scenarios for the possible use of nuclear weapons. The beneficiaries of the positive security assurance under the nuclear umbrella are supporting the status quo, either by supporting the reliability and modernization of the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States that give them the umbrella, or by being satisfied with silence on the lack of progress on negative security assurances. Any threats are a blatant breach of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles agreed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the illegality of the use of such weapons and the package for the conclusion and extension of the NPT, which shall not be tolerated any more.

The international community should not await the deployment of such weapons to react.

While we believe that nuclear-weapon-free zones are positive steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we reject the arguments stating that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Insistence on these kinds of weak arguments only results in further weakening the package of the conditions for the conclusion and extension of the NPT, and puts the credibility of the NPT into jeopardy. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of the provisions of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is a positive step and important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this context — nuclear-weapon-free zones — it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional and legally binding assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. As the initiator of the proposal for the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons since 1974, we firmly support the speedy establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. But it is a matter of serious concern that, due to the highest level of double standards and discrimination by some nuclear-weapon States in generously rewarding the non-NPT party in the region, the only obstacle to the creation of such a zone in the region is the non-NPT party, which feels no pressure to move in the direction of the creation of such a zone in the Middle East.

It is clear that unilateral declarations cannot replace internationally legally binding commitments. The assurances provided under protocols to treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones are also subject to many conditions and fall far short of the expectations of non-nuclear-weapon States. All of these vicious developments have put the non-nuclear-weapon States more than ever under the real threat of the possible use of nuclear weapons.

We remain convinced that the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination, through transparent, verifiable and irreversible measures in accordance with article VI of the NPT, as stipulated in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in 1996. So, pending achieving that goal, nuclear-weapon States must provide legally binding, credible and effective security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority by the Conference on Disarmament.

We propose that the Conference should establish a subsidiary body to commence negotiations on a draft legally binding instrument on the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons, providing unconditional security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT as a matter of urgency.

The President: I thank the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for his statement. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of Myanmar.

Mr. Wai (Myanmar): Mr. President, because this is the first time I am taking the floor during your presidency, I would like first of all to thank you and your country, Mongolia, for leading the Conference on Disarmament this year as one of the six Presidents.

I still recall the joint statement delivered by me on behalf of the member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 26 March 2013 at the plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament. Please allow me to quote the relevant part from that joint statement: “We would like to stress that it is also necessary, in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against all States in nuclear-weapon-free zones.”

As a member State of ASEAN, Myanmar associated itself with that joint statement and continues to do so. Together with like-minded countries, we share the view that the provision of legally binding security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States constitutes an important incremental step towards a world without nuclear weapons. We, as non-nuclear-weapon States, commit ourselves not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons. We believe that, as a matter of reciprocity, we should be entitled to receive negative security assurances from nuclear-weapon States. This is one of the fundamentals of our way of thinking.

Negative security assurances constitute one of the four core issues on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. As you are aware, the General Assembly has, since the 1990s, adopted resolutions annually calling upon the Conference to start negotiations to conclude an international legal instrument on negative security assurances. For many years in a row, the Conference established ad hoc committees on negative security assurances. These committees carried out intensive work on ways and means to achieve negative security assurances and produced some useful proposals. In a way, they have laid a strong foundation for the negotiation of a relevant legal instrument on negative security assurances.

Taking into consideration the current international security climate in general and the existing atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament in particular, my delegation is of the view that maybe the most promising way for the Conference to move forward right now could be to take up the agenda item on negative security assurances. Therefore, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to call upon the Conference to start substantive work on negative security assurances, at an early date, based on the work laid out by the previous ad hoc committees.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Myanmar for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Mr. Varma (India): On the happy occasion of International Women's Day, we compliment the statement that has been made on that important occasion. We also associate ourselves with the statement made by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 21.

We welcome this opportunity to discuss negative security assurances. The Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament called upon nuclear-weapon States to take steps to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We believe that non-nuclear-weapon States have a legitimate right to be assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The history of negative security assurances is a long one, largely of unfulfilled promises and aspirations for legally binding assurances.

Nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humanity, and the best assurance against their use or threat of use is their complete elimination. India has been consistent in its support for global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament. India attended the three conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons at Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna in the hope that renewed attention on the most serious threat to the survival of humankind posed by the use of nuclear weapons would help generate momentum for increased restraints on the use of such weapons and thus correct an imbalance in the international discourse that has focused almost exclusively on restraints on possession.

Mr. President, I would like to draw your attention and that of other members to an important study produced by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research last year on the impact of nuclear weapons, which basically drew the simple conclusion that addressing or ameliorating the consequences of use was beyond the capacity of any single State or even of the United Nations family of international organizations. It makes sober

reading, and it is important to see the study against the background of promises and assurances made earlier of providing assistance to victims of nuclear weapons, including in Security Council resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995).

India has called for progressive steps for the delegitimization of nuclear weapons, which we believe is essential for achieving the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Pending their elimination, measures to reduce nuclear dangers arising from the accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons, and increasing restraints on the use of nuclear weapons, are pertinent in this regard. India has therefore called for an agreed multilateral framework that would bring together all States possessing nuclear weapons to discuss measures relating to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies.

For its part, India has a policy of no first use against nuclear-weapon States and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. We are prepared to convert these undertakings into multilateral legal arrangements.

For over three decades, the First Committee has voted in favour of a resolution sponsored by India calling on this Conference to negotiate a convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. It was adopted last year as United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/69. Reference to this was also made in the statement on behalf of the Group of 21 made by the Ambassador of Egypt.

The Indian resolution in the First Committee on reducing the nuclear danger is also supported by a large number of States. In our working paper contained in document CD/1816, India suggested specific measures, including a global no-first-use agreement.

India supported resolution 69/30 adopted by the General Assembly last year, which recommends that the Conference on Disarmament actively continue consideration and negotiations on the issue of negative security assurances. India also joined the Group of 21 working paper contained in document CD/1960 and submitted in 2013. We remain committed to work with other Conference members towards the objective of the establishment of a subsidiary body to negotiate with a view to reaching agreement on effective international agreements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of India for his statement. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Ethiopia. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. Maruta (Ethiopia): Mr. President, as my delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, I would like to express my appreciation for the efficient manner in which you have been conducting the business of the Conference on Disarmament. I would also like to assure you and the subsequent Presidents of the Conference of support in the fulfilment of your respective roles. The delegation of Ethiopia associates itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 21. We also support many of the colleagues who have spoken before me and expressed their concerns on the issue of negative security assurances.

The delegation of Ethiopia also, like many countries, particularly those belonging to the Non-Aligned Movement, welcomes the fact that nuclear-weapon States are pursuing efforts to conclude both negative and positive security assurances. Further steps should be considered to assure non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in compliance with United Nations Security Council resolution 984 of 1995. In this context, it is to be recalled that no specific provision on security assurances was included in the Treaty for non-nuclear-weapon States. Instead, action was taken unilaterally with a different approach to the NPT. In this regard, the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-

free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at was a fundamental step allowing the enhancement of global and regional peace and security and contributing towards realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament.

Ethiopia believes that the existence of a binding treaty or resolution containing negative security assurances is imperative, as has been repeatedly called for by non-nuclear-weapon States.

In conclusion, it is the conviction of my delegation that nuclear weapons endanger the security of us all, and thus they should be abolished so that they can never be used again under any circumstances.

The President: I thank the representative of Ethiopia for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Motta Pinto Coelho (Brazil): Mr. President, I would like to first of all extend my appreciation for the way in which you have been presiding over the Conference. We, as Brazil, would like also to extend our appreciation for the statement made at the beginning of this session by the representative of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on issues that we feel should merit our focused attention.

I would like to reiterate the deep conviction of Brazil that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only and most effective assurance against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the complete and effective elimination of nuclear weapons, it is imperative that non-nuclear-weapon States are given assurances that they will not be attacked or threatened with those weapons. A universally legally binding instrument on negative security assurances would reinforce the notion that international security must be based on the rule of law rather than the use of force. All these elements have been put forward here by previous delegations, and I would like at this point to associate Brazil with the statement made by the Ambassador of Egypt, on behalf of the Group of 21, as well as other delegations that have made very clear statements along these lines.

As of today, there is no universal, legally binding treaty containing negative security assurances. Some non-nuclear-weapon States are not interested in the matter because they feel assured by means of their participation in military alliances based on nuclear weapons. Other non-nuclear-weapon States, in spite of their interest in security assurances, believe that the matter should be confined to the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The reluctance of nuclear-weapon States to embark on negotiation of a universal, legally binding treaty on negative security assurances undermines the security of States that have renounced nuclear weapons, as it is an indication that nuclear-weapon States might actually consider using those weapons even if only in "extreme cases". Additionally, it reinforces the misconception that the possession of and right to use nuclear weapons will deter aggression and increase security.

Of all the core issues, negotiations on negative security assurances would certainly be the most simple and uncontroversial ones, as has been put forward here for example by our colleague from Pakistan in his statement. I would at this point add also that this negotiation should be, I understand, a low-key kind of negotiation, because of two basic elements that would be implied in these negotiations. The first one is that the issue is morally imperative. It is unacceptable to not have as of today a negotiated and legally binding instrument on negative security assurances. Also because it does not need to imply the acceptance of nuclear weapons, although until such time as we have a nuclear disarmament treaty we would have to accept and insist on the priority to be given to the negotiation of nuclear security assurances on a legally binding basis.

Brazil expects that the Conference will adopt a programme of work as soon as possible with the inclusion of a working group on negative security assurances. We believe that a legally binding instrument containing assurances by nuclear-weapon States that they would not use or threaten to use those weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States is urgently required. Positive security assurances and non-binding political declarations are not enough. Discussions on negative security assurances usually encompass the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the need to reinforce them. We can go along those lines, and Brazil together with New Zealand has, at the United Nations General Assembly, for a number of years now been insisting even that we should establish a nuclear-free zone in the southern hemisphere, given the fact that most of these questions related to nuclear weapons possession are limited to the northern hemisphere. A revision of such statements is long overdue. Not only should the interpretative statements be withdrawn: another imperative step would be the immediate negotiation of an internationally legally binding instrument providing unconditional assurances to all non-nuclear-weapon States.

As we know, the first legally binding negative security assurance was contained in the Treaty of Tlatelolco of 1967, which we are very proud of and which made Latin America and the Caribbean a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Brazil was among the proponents of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region. The Treaty inspired other regions to follow suit and establish similar zones. We hope that the meeting on nuclear-weapon-free zones scheduled for April in New York will produce some important results in that aspect.

The remarkable fact that almost the entire southern hemisphere, as I have indicated, as well as central Asia and Mongolia, are nowadays nuclear-weapon-free means that the problem posed by the continued existence and potential proliferation of nuclear weapons is attributed to the northern hemisphere.

Mr. President, I would be looking forward — we have already seen some statements — but I would be looking forward to hearing in this debate — thank you very much for its provision — we look forward to hearing from nuclear-weapon States contemporary arguments that might in their view justify the fact that they would not be at present willing to join a common effort towards negotiation of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances, given the fact that most of these reasonings and arguments that we have heard so far date back to the 1980s, the 1990s at most, and they somehow are very much related to outdated circumstances, especially related to the cold war. So I think it is important if we could — we at least would look forward to hearing statements and explanations on why, because I fail to understand — and I think Brazil is on the record for that, failing to understand why there are still pending arguments that justify, or would try to justify, the non-compliance of nuclear-weapon States with the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances.

The President: I thank the Ambassador of Brazil for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The next speaker on my list is the representative of New Zealand. You have the floor, Madam.

Ms. Donnelly (New Zealand): Mr. President, as this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, please allow me to thank you for your leadership and your efforts, as well as those of your delegation, to move us forward. As we ourselves edge ever closer to the podium, we are increasingly appreciative of your commitment, as well as that of your predecessor Mexico, to guide our work. New Zealand looks forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months as part of the group of six Presidents.

I wanted to take the floor to respond to the statement delivered this morning by Ms. Mia Gandenberger on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. As this may well be the last time I am given the opportunity to engage directly in this

Conference on Disarmament with this very valued member of civil society, I wanted to put on record the deep appreciation of my delegation of the work done by the League to share what happens in this body with the outside world, to provide commentary, explain the arcane procedures followed here, and to translate for the real world the consequences of our ongoing failure to fulfil the Conference's negotiating mandate. You will be missed, and we look forward to continuing our engagement with you in some of the more progressive forums in which we pursue a world without nuclear weapons.

It is surely a wake-up call to us all when even the indefatigable Women's League gets tired of the Conference on Disarmament and leaves.

The situation before us now brings to mind a famous proverb of the indigenous Maori population of New Zealand — *He aha t mea nui? He tangata. He tangata. He tangata.* — (What is the most important thing? It is people. It is people. It is people.) It is regrettable but perhaps not surprising that the efforts of some in this body to exclude people from its deliberations, whether by blocking the admission of new members or preventing the participation of civil society, have led the one group that was still interested in our work to lose hope, not only in our ability but also in our willingness to change for the better. With the departure of the last civil society representative paying regular attention to the Conference on Disarmament, we must all strive to ensure that we do not forget on whose behalf we are here and for whose benefit we must get back to work.

The President: I thank the representative of New Zealand for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

Mr. Omarov (Kazakhstan): This is not a statement but a message of thanks concerning the Treaty of Semipalatinsk on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. We would like to thank the Governments of France and the United Kingdom for ratifying the protocol to the Treaty of Semipalatinsk. We also thank the Government of China for information concerning progress in the ratification of the protocols.

We are still awaiting some information on finalization of the ratification process from the Russian Federation and the United States. We think that the signing of the protocol and early ratification will be a significant contribution to the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in April and May this year.

The President: I thank the representative of Kazakhstan for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Deyneko (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I am aware, of course, that women's day has just taken place and I sincerely congratulate women in that regard, but it seems to me that this happy and, indeed, great occasion, which is International Women's Day, should not be used as an opportunity to engage in finger-pointing at the Conference on Disarmament, which simply exacerbates the diverging approaches to some rather serious and important items on the Conference's agenda. As you know, we are here to deal with disarmament issues. So tell me, what is the relationship between disarmament and gender-based violence, which can be committed without any weapons at all? Let us, then, stick to the agreed agenda and keep to the point.

The Russian delegation recognizes the importance of negative security assurances for many, if not the majority of, delegations at the Conference. Confirmation of that is the inclusion of negative security assurances as one of four key issues on the Conference agenda. Back in 1995, Russia, along with other nuclear-weapon States, co-sponsored Security Council resolution 984 (1995). In accordance with that resolution, positive security assurances were provided to non-nuclear-weapon States, and the corresponding national declarations of nuclear-weapon States on negative assurances were taken into account.

The issue of security assurances is particularly significant in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia consistently supports the aspirations of States parties to the treaty that do not have nuclear weapons to secure such a commitment on the part of nuclear-weapon States. As you know, the legally binding assurances are issued under the relevant protocols to various treaties on the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Russia has signed and ratified the protocols to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Pelindaba and Rarotonga.

Last year at the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the nuclear-weapon States concluded a protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. I wish to emphasize the fact that this was the first time in world history that a protocol had been signed simultaneously by all nuclear-weapon States that were parties to the NPT. In signing the protocol, Russia stated its traditional reservations, in accordance with its military doctrine, which accompany the provision of negative security assurances. That is standard practice and is intended to prevent any possible abuse of the provisions of the Treaty that could run counter to the objective of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The same applies to all other nuclear-weapon-free zones. The signing of the protocol constituted a huge step towards achieving the establishment in international law of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We intend to ratify the protocol in the very near future.

We also support the efforts of Mongolia to strengthen its nuclear-weapon-free status. Within the framework of a bilateral agreement, Russia has committed itself to respecting that status and providing the appropriate guarantees. We also participated in the joint declaration of nuclear-weapon States on the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia, which was signed at the sixty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Accordingly, overall the Russian Federation has provided legally binding security guarantees to more than 100 States. But we are ready to go further and work towards expanding the area covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones. We support efforts to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. We consider its establishment in international law to be a priority and we are ready to sign the corresponding protocol to the Bangkok Treaty, providing for the standard reservations that protect our national interests.

One pressing issue is the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East. The importance of that initiative was affirmed in the decisions of the NPT Review Conferences of 1995 and 2010. We support the efforts of the special coordinator of the Conference, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Jaakko Laajava. We are in favour of the rapid completion of the preparatory phase and the convening of the conference. Russia, in its capacity as a co-founder, is ready to provide all possible support to the process, as it has done in the past. However, we must remember that a zone free of weapons of mass destruction will not be created in the region overnight. It will require hard work. But the mere fact of the process beginning is extremely significant in terms of the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The Conference on Disarmament has the mandate and necessary capacity to work on the issue of security assurances, primarily thanks to its unique status as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. In that regard, we support the rapid initiation of a substantive dialogue on negative security assurances at the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, if the programme of work for the Conference is adopted, we are ready to take part in the drafting at the Conference of a global agreement on assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, taking into account the provisions established by our military doctrine.

At this point, I should probably explain what I mean by the aforementioned provisions of the military doctrine of the Russian Federation. There are two such provisions. Russia can, or is entitled to, use nuclear weapons in the case of aggression against it involving the use of nuclear weapons — that is the first case. The second case is aggression using conventional weapons, but only if it threatens the very existence of the State. Therefore, the standard reservations that we apply in relation to the use of nuclear weapons cover the following two scenarios: firstly, cases where a non-nuclear-weapon State participates in aggression against the Russian Federation jointly with a nuclear-weapon State that is using nuclear weapons; secondly, the Russian Federation does not consider itself to be bound by the obligations under the protocol in the event that temporary or permanent nuclear weapons are discovered in the territory of States participating in the respective nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Tell me (and I posed this question last year at informal consultations, but received no reply): in what way do these reservations, or interpretative declarations, infringe upon the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States that intend to fulfil their obligations under the corresponding treaties in good faith — i.e., not to participate jointly with any nuclear-weapon State in aggression against the Russian Federation or in aggression using conventional weapons that would threaten the existence of the Russian State? That point should be considered and we should probably pursue the debate during the thematic discussions that we hope will be taking place this year following the adoption of the relevant decisions.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his statement. I have no more speakers on the list. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? That does not seem to be the case.

You may recall that during the plenary meeting held on 17 February we decided to convene formal plenary meetings in order to have a focused discussion and exchange of views on the four core issues, namely, nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cut-off treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and negative security assurances.

Today we have concluded substantive discussions on the four core issues. I hope that many of you will agree that there was a spirit of engagement and that discussions have been very useful and substantive on these four core issues.

We have learned about new developments, new initiatives and various proposals that need to be explored further. I am very hopeful that this will contribute to the advancement of the work of the Conference.

In addition, I am pleased to note that the Conference had a successful high-level segment. We had a great number of dignitaries who addressed the Conference and expressed their views on various issues relating to the work of the Conference. This demonstrates the high importance that many States attach to the Conference, while at the same time urging the Conference to deliver on its mandate by resuming substantive work as soon as possible.

As you are well aware, we have also been consulting on three draft proposals during the Mongolian presidency, namely on the re-establishment of the informal working group on the programme of work, on the draft schedule of activities for the 2015 session of the Conference and on the establishment of the informal working group on methods of work.

Our presidency has made its best efforts to conduct consultations on these draft documents to the extent possible. Yesterday morning, for example, I had another round of meetings with regional coordinators and received initial feedback and comments on the three draft proposals. However, at this moment, not all regional groups have been able to provide their feedback, so I can see that the consultations need to be continued.

As the Mongolian presidency comes to an end, I am very hopeful that the next presidency — that of our Moroccan colleagues — will continue consultations on those draft proposals.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all delegations, including the six Presidents and the regional coordinators, for the great support and collaboration extended to me and my team. I would also like to thank the interpreters, the conference officers and the Conference secretariat for the support provided to our presidency.

This concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 17 March, at 10 a.m. under the presidency of Morocco.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.



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